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T H E
DISTRESSED LOVERS:

OR, THE
H I S T O R Y

O F
EDWARD and ELIZA:

In a SERIES of LETTERS.

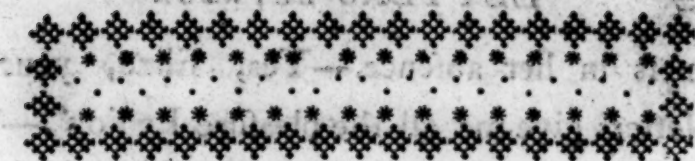
IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L I.

D U B L I N:

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LETTERS

BETWEEN

EDWARD and ELIZA.



LETTER I.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

DEPRIVED of my dear Eliza's conversation, I receive no small comfort from her letters. They always afford me the highest entertainment, during the intervals of leisure from the busy scenes I am by necessity engaged in ; and without them I should enjoy no happi-

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ness

ness in her absence.—Yes, Eliza, your letters give me all the pleasure I enjoy,—they reconcile me to a situation which would otherwise be insupportable.—How often do I exclaim with Romeo,

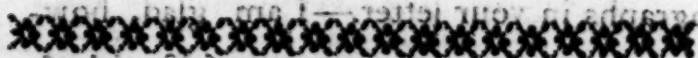
Fathers have flinty hearts ;—
Children must ne'er be blest.

Yet still, I hope that time may turn the hearts of those who now treat us with so much severity.—Did I not keep up my spirits by forming schemes of future felicity, I should certainly degenerate into a misanthropist. — I meet with so many things every day to sour my temper, from my connections with people in whose faces I am forced to smile, at the same time that I despise them in my heart, that I frequently retire to my lodgings quite out of humour with society ;—a mere Cynic.

To be out of humour with the world in general, because we are disgusted with a few, is certainly wrong, and I will try
to

to correct my disposition; but as our tempers are very apt to be affected by the company we keep, I am afraid, I shall not be able to bear the "insolence of office" with the composure of a philosopher.—Comfort me, Eliza, with one of your cheerful letters; for I want consolation.—I feel every day more and more the loss of your company; and all conversation but your's, so peevish am I grown, is hateful to the ear of

EDWARD.



LETTER II.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

I Am sorry you give way to gloomy ideas. Can Edward be a Diogenes? the last man in the world whom I should suspect of adopting the manners of Cynic.—But

B 2

your

your last letter is written in so vapourish and fretful a style, that I am afraid something uncommonly disagreeable has happened, to extort such strictures against society.—Consider, my dear Edward, that, if we expect to receive pleasure from the world, we must be willing to give it; otherwise, we are not upon equal terms.—You are not, I know, naturally inclined to view things in a dark light.—I hope I shall make you smile, by coupling those words so closely together; and therefore am the more surpris'd at the peevish paragraphs in your letter.—I am glad, however, that you unbosom yourself with so much unreservedness, for I dearly love the language of the heart; and you may be sure, that the language of yours is particularly interesting to

ELIZA.

LET-



L E T T E R I I I .

EDWARD to ELIZA.

A Letter from Eliza is the best cordial for low-spirits I know of. — What strange creatures we are ! But how should we be otherwise in such a changeable climate?—— You see I am a true Englishman, by quarrelling with the weather.—Without joking, however, I believe That has no small effect on the bodies, and consequently the minds of my foggy countrymen.—I am in a mood so different from that in which I wrote my last letter, that I could, in the language of Lee, “snuff the moon ;” such a turn has your last letter given to my *de-ears*, as Slipshod calls them. I am quite elevated, and have nothing to do with your *dark lights*.—But, hold thy pen a little, Ed-

ward ;—or else Eliza will think that thou has quitted thy tub for a tavern —To be serious therefore——

YOUR letter found me at our amiable friend's Mrs. C——, who is, you know, a very sensible woman ; and I had the pleasure of drinking tea with half a dozen people of both sexes, as sensible as herself ; and yet believe me, Eliza, I never spent a duller afternoon in my life.—'Tis true, the company were mixed ; and to that I attribute the emptiness of the tattle ; for on those occasions there is hardly any conversation. The dearth of provisions, the degeneracy of the age, and the uncertainty of the weather, with a few news-paper paragraphs, furnish a great deal of insignificant chat ; but no subjects interesting or amusing were discussed ; so that you will not wonder that I went home in a very muzzy humour ; but that muzziness soon went off, —
thanks

thanks to your friendly hand, as friendly as it is fair.

EDWARD.



LETTER IV.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

WHAT would I give to enjoy such a muzzy afternoon with my friends in London?—Locked up from the world in this mournful mansion-house, I feel all the misery, without enjoying any of the comforts, of a monastic life.—I have privacy, but I have no peace.—My vigilant aunt watches me with such cruel assiduity, that it is with the utmost difficulty I contrive to forward my little dispatches to you.—'Tis a horrible thing to be so watched;—and yet I make myself tolerably easy under my confinement, be-

cause I hope that Providence will reward our constancy and truth ; and because I am determined that nothing shall make me false to thee. Armed with this resolution, I shall, I trust, rise superior to all the efforts of parental tyranny.—How unluckily fortunate, for me, was my father, when he received so considerable an addition to his patrimony : so unexpected an acquisition has converted the most indulgent parent into ————— a character which a good daughter is unwilling to describe ;—and yet, notwithstanding all his severity, such is my opinion of the rectitude of his heart, that I am inclined to believe, he intended to make us happy in the completion of our wishes, before he was dazzled with the splendor of wealth.—Why else did he so warmly encourage the intimacy between us, and with so much ardor express his satisfaction at our approaching union ? — But I will not indulge this melancholy subject.

—It

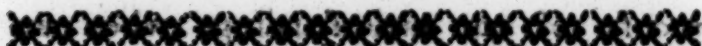
—It is more prudent, and certainly more pleasing, to look forward with hope, than to look back with discontent.—You will say I am very philosophical :—I endeavour to be so, as much as the infirmities of human nature will permit me. To bear the disappointments we meet with, without murmuring at the decrees of Providence, is our duty ; but we give no proofs of our understanding, when we pretend to be void of sensibility.

I AM, unawares, sliding into a very solemn stile ; but I hope my letter will not fill you with any melancholy thoughts.—I am, you know, naturally given to make reflections ; sometimes very serious ones ; but I would not have you, at any time, alarmed about them, and imagine, that I am in a state of despondence, when I crowd my page with them :—I am rarely very merry, but was never more cheerful.—How should I be merry within these walls ?

walls?—Write soon;—write much;—
you cannot write too much to your

ELIZA.

P. S. Many thanks for the book you sent
me.—The author must surely be a most
agreeable companion.



LETTER V.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

CHARMING moralist!—Thou art an
ornament to thy sex!—

O! were they all like thee, men would adore
them,
And all the business of their lives be loving.

Excuse the raptures you have raised your
self; and believe me when I tell you,
that

that your last letter has very much increased the high opinion I ever had of your understanding and your heart. — With that part I am uncommonly pleased, where you speak with so much tenderness of your father, and discover so much unwillingness to think hardly of him. — Such filial affection is rare ; but surely, it will be rewarded. — I will try to think of him with as much candor ; but, can he who makes my Eliza unhappy, deserve it ? — I must change the subject, for fear I should express myself with too much acrimony. — I would not offend Thy ears for the world. — I am very glad to find, though not in the least surprised, that you admire the book I sent you ; but, if, you suppose that the author of it is an agreeable companion, you are much mistaken. — As a writer, he is excellent ; as a companion, execrable. — He has so strong a passion for shining in conversation, that he never pleases : and displays his academical accomplishments with such a pedantic

dantic parade, that his arrogance and self-conceit are not to be endured.—I desire never to see him but in print.—How few are happily disposed to give pleasure in conversation ! I say disposed ; because, in general, the mere disposition to give pleasure will make us agreeable ; and without it we can never expect to receive it.—The efforts we make to entertain, often excite disgust ; but by discovering a desire to be entertained, we pay a compliment to those we converse with, which produces the most agreeable consequences.—For, by always listening to others with patience, we shall always be listened to, when we speak ourselves, with attention.—So much for conversation ; on which, if I go on, I shall be a downright drowsy essay-writer, and a very dull correspondent.— I must lay down my pen awhile, for I hear your lively cousin Sophy upon the stairs : her vivacity will give a new turn to my thoughts ; and 'tis most probable that the remainder of my letter,—
when

when I have time to finish it,—will give a turn also to your's; for, *entre nous*, we begin, I think, both of us, to grow rather grave characters.

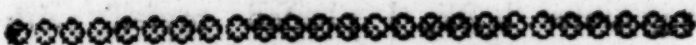
THE lively girl is gone, and has, indeed, given a new turn to my thoughts.—Such a turn, Eliza!—What think you was her intelligence?—Your father set out this morning for ———, with old Sir Luke, whom, by your cousin's account and I fear her information is not to be doubted, — he has admitted, for the sake of his title and his estate, contiguous to his own, as a lover to ——— Have I not reason to be alarmed?—Can Edward be composed when Eliza is on the brink of being sacrificed to old age, ugliness, and ——— riches? ———Ay—there's the rub.—If I write wildly, you cannot wonder; for when the mind is struggling between hope and fear, the disturbance of all its ideas — Interrupted again!—There is an anxious eagerness

in John's looks which distract me! —
O! Eliza, — now, indeed, I want consolation more than ever; — the best of mothers is seized by the hand of death, and I am suddenly sent for to take a last farewell. — Pity, — I am sure you will pity the distressed situation of your deeply-afflicted

EDWARD.

P. S. Before I set out, I snatch this moment to inform you, that, by a second messenger, I find the dear woman is recovered from the stroke; but lies in so dreadful a condition, that the physicians cannot pronounce her out of danger. — I fly to give her all the relief in my power. — How little, — how very little, — is all human greatness in the hour of dissolution?

LET-



LETTER VI.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

WELL said, rapturous Edward, —

“ Very fine, very pretty indeed !”

By the assistance of Mr. Rowe, you have paid me a very high heroical compliment. — I will study to deserve it — I am very glad any thing I said in my last letter has increased your good opinion of me ; and that I hope, whatever be my lot, I shall never lose. — You did right to check your acrimony ; for you would greatly offend my ears by sharp expressions against him, whose past indulgences are ever to be remembered with gratitude. —

ALL

ALL the time I was reading Mr. D—'s ingenious book, I pleased myself with thinking what an agreeable companion he would sometimes be to my Edward, in his hours of relaxation; but your account of him has given me such a disgust to the man, that I shall not take half so much pleasure in his writings, as I did before this information: and the next time I meet with an ingenious book, I shall carefully avoid all enquiries about the author, for fear I should be again disappointed and disgusted.—

SOPHIA's information was true.—My father arrived here last night, with Sir Luke.—

How you have alarmed me about your dear mother! Such blows, at her time of life, are indeed to be dreaded; but as she has, I find by your postscript, recovered from this stroke, heaven will, I hope, preserve her life for the happiness of

of her Edward: and, of consequence,
for the felicity of

ELIZA.

P. S. Sir Luke is your rival.



LETTER VII.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

RACKS and tortures!—Sir Luke
my rival!

“Forbid it, heav’n! and forbid it, love!”

THERE are passages in your last letter
so mystical and alarming, that I am in
a state of mind little short of distraction;
—when you mention my good opinion,
“That (you say) I hope, whatever be
“my lot, I shall never lose!”—What-
ever be my lot!—I have revolved these
words over and over, and the more I
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revolve them, the more they torment me. — The cool manner too in which you barely confirm your cousin's intelligence, is so different from your usual strain of writing to me, that I am at a loss how to account for it : — the more at a loss, because it is the first time ; and till I receive a more satisfactory letter from you, I shall have no peace. — On the receipt of this, therefore, keep me no longer in ignorance, but let me know the worst. — Any thing is better than suspense. — I hardly know what I write, so unquiet is my mind, and so confused its ideas : — restless, disturbed. — Yet I will hope ; — for sure Eliza, after all her protestations, after all the proofs she has given me of her sincere affection, can never forget those protestations, nor act in opposition to those proofs. — Your father, — I will not shock your filial ears, — but, may I not call him cruel ? — Yes, Eliza, he is cruel, to make duty and affection incompatible. — But I waste the time. — Sir
Luke,

Luke!— title,— estate!— let me not think on that;— “That way madness lies.”—

EDWARD.

P. S. My mother, thank God, grows better every day; but I dare not tell her what I feel on your account.



LETTER VIII.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

P O O R Edward! and so you are really alarmed about Sir Luke ———. But pray make yourself quite easy on his account, for, I assure you, he is by no means a formidable rival. I am a little angry with you, however, for making yourself unhappy about so contemptible a creature; and for entertaining any doubts concerning my fidelity or my love: but

C 2

I forgive

I forgive you.—The disturbance of your mind is an additional proof of the strength of your affection. — Sir Luke is the most horrid object I ever saw on two legs.— Rather than encourage his addresses, I would submit to the greatest inconveniences. He is odious to the last degree ; doubly odious by the ridiculous efforts he makes to render himself agreeable in my eyes.—You need be under no terrifying apprehensions about a man so frightful in his person, and so forbidding in his address.

I AM very glad to hear that your mother is in so fair a way, and hope that you will, by communicating the contents of this letter, contribute to her recovery ; for I know she is very much interested in our affairs.—I, once, had a mother !— would she were now alive !

SOPHY is come to stay a week with us ; so that I expect by the sprightliness of her conversation, to catch some of her vivacity,

vivacity, and by that means become a more lively correspondent.—She is a most entertaining girl, has such a fine flow of spirits, and such a fund of good-nature, that I shall be sorry whenever she leaves us:—she is very sincerely your friend; and says so many handsome things of you, that if I was the least inclined to jealousy, I should feel rather queer when she runs on in your praise:—but, instead of being jealous, I enjoy her panegyrics.—

I TAKE an opportunity to send this letter by Harry H——, from whom I have received many civilities here.—He is as good-natured a young fellow as ever lived; and every body in this neighbourhood is fond of his company, because he has the happy art of making all those with whom he converses, pleased with themselves. He is the Wimble of W—shire, and in every part of the county leaves the most agreeable traces of the goodness of his heart, and laborious inactivity, if I

may use the expression ; for Harry is always doing a thousand little kindnesses which require no fatigue, but which endear him to all his acquaintance. To the service of our sex he devotes a great deal of his time ; and if he sees by our smiles, that we are pleased with his endeavours to give us pleasure, he thinks himself with those smiles sufficiently rewarded. He works a skreen, and knits a pair of mittens to a miracle ; and you may therefore recommend him to miss ———, as a very useful hand : but I say nothing of his head. — Adieu. — Forget Sir Luke, and remember

ELIZA.

LET-



L E T T E R IX.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

“Avaunt, my fears! Edward’s himself again.”

THANKS, many thanks, dear Eliza, for the glad tidings conveyed to me in your last letter.—Nothing could equal the impatience with which I opened it, but the pleasure with which I read it.—I shall love Harry for bringing it, as long as I live.—I am quite a new creature. How could I be so egregious a fool as to give way to such — But they are all vanished.—I am ready to — By the entrance of an intruder I must lay down my pen.—Old D—! you know him well; and therefore will compassionate my situation.—

THANK heaven ! the dull drone is departed : the walking book-case has taken himself away, after having made more than a visit,— a visitation.— When I compare him with Harry ———, notwithstanding the superiority of his intellects, he suffers, in my opinion, by the comparison ; for Harry, with all His assiduity to please, is never impertinent ; but this bookful blockhead is, with his learned lumber, the most troublesome fellow I ever met with. He has read a prodigious number of books without the least taste, without any distinction ; and therefore, though he has something to say on every subject, he is on every subject trifling and unimportant. If the knowledge which he has acquired by perpetual reading was well digested, and under the direction of good sense, he would be a very entertaining and instructive companion ; but, as he has only just sense enough to think himself wiser than every body with whom he converses, he talks away, immoderately loquacious,

quacious, with all the vanity of a fool, and the arrogance of a coxcomb.

I AM very glad to hear that Sophy is at S——, and beg you would thank her for saying so many — she is a good girl, and, I am sure, means well.—You will find your time steal away very agreeably in her company.—I could say many handsome things of her too, but suppress them, because I would not make her vain ; for you will, I know, read this letter to her.

I SHALL certainly recommend Harry to Miss ——, for she doats on new characters ; and Harry is, in his way, a curiosity.—You describe his character with so much spirit, that, I hope, when you meet with any personages in the country equally curious, you will put them down upon paper.—I shall be glad to hear how Sir Luke goes on.—I am perfectly easy about him ;—but I should
be

be pleased to hear how he conducts himself, and how your father behaves upon your visible disapprobation of his choice ; for visible, I am sure, it is.—You have too honest a countenance to conceal it.

My mother mends every day.—I shortly intend to communicate the passages in your letter, which you rightly imagine will contribute to her recovery.

Your's for ever,

EDWARD.

LET-



L E T T E R X.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

NOTWITHSTANDING you say you are “perfectly easy about him,” I find you are still harping upon Sir Luke. — Sophy says, if she was in my place, she would certainly give you cause to be jealous.—She has no patience with you, for being so anxiously inquisitive about an object so every way beneath your attention.—Indeed, my dear Edward, many women, in my situation, would plague you heartily, for being so strangely alarmed about trifles; but I know you too well to be surprised at the quickness of your sensibility, and love you too much to put that sensibility to the rack.—Be as perfectly easy, therefore, as you say you are; for Sir Luke decamped
this

this morning, as he found he had no chance by all his own assiduities, added to those of my father, to make me Lady —, except by parental compulsion ; and of that he had too much honour and humanity to avail himself.—Setting aside his age and ugliness, Sir Luke is a good sort of a man ; and though I never could receive him as a lover, I shall always stand up for his behaviour as a man :—and so I hope you will ; for if he had been as mercenary as my father,—I tremble to think of the consequences.—My father frets and fumes like a madman at his disappointment, having flattered himself with the hopes of my not being able to resist so advantageous a match ; thinking, to be sure, in the true spirit of avarice, that money is the foundation of felicity in this world ; and that for the sake of being *My Ladied*, about the town, I should not hesitate a moment. My aunt says and does all in her power to pacify him ; for I have been so happy

as to bring her over to my interest : but in vain. — He is deaf to all the reasons which she urges against so preposterous an union ; and I am much afraid, that if another money - match should offer, disinheritorship would follow a non - compliance with his lucrative views, if my lover is prompted by the same motives to make his addresses to me. — However, I am so well satisfied with having had such an escape,—that I am grateful to Providence for delivering me from a marriage of misery ; and should think myself highly to blame, did I, like you, ingeniously torment myself with the horrors of imagination.—Think as I do on this occasion, Edward, and let me hear no more of your horrors.

I am diverted with your calling old D—— a walking book-case.—What a strange animal ! —I did compassionate your situation, while you was worried by his loquacity. I don't wonder that Harry appears

appears to advantage by the comparison. By the hint I gave of his Head, you must not set him down for a fool.—Harry by no means is entitled to that appellation: I rather think he may be pronounced a wise man; for he never attempts to talk on any topic of which he has not a thorough knowledge.—His topics indeed are often trifling, but by his manner of treating them they agreeably amuse; and how much more tolerable is such a man, than the bookful blockhead, who superficially skims the surface of every subject which is started, but never dives to the bottom of it?—

You guessed right.—I certainly communicated your compliment to Sophy, and she simpered over it with no small satisfaction.—She is, indeed, a good girl, in the strictest sense of the word; and were it not for her company, I should lead a moping life.————She has always something sprightly to say; and, when-
ever

eyer I am in the least inclined to the va-
 pours, I find her conversation of infinite
 service.——She is as fond of a garden as
 I am ; and you would smile to see how
 busy we are about our flowers, of which
 we are both particularly fond.—As I re-
 ceive great delight from my sense of smel-
 ling, which is very acute, I am never so
 happy as when I am snuffing up the aro-
 matic fragrance of a carnation, or the
 rich odours of a rose.—Our garden is in
 all its beauty, and I enjoy it.—How I
 run on with my raptures ! But those,
 surely, which are inspired by a survey
 of the beauties of nature ought not to be
 ridiculed ?— They are rational and they
 are innocent.—When you are in a hu-
 mour to consider this subject, I wish you
 would commit your thoughts to paper,
 and send them to

ELIZA.

LET-



LETTER XI.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

SIR Luke decamped !—— Then all my doubts are fled.

SOPHY is a saucy girl.—I wish she was heartily in love : I should then have an opportunity to triumph in my turn ; for, take my word for it, she will be horribly —— let her make out the rest of my meaning.——

WAS I alarmed at trifles ?—I was.—I see myself in a very ridiculous light, and blush at my behaviour. — And yet, Eliza, as ridiculous as I appear to myself on these occasions, I would not, on any account, give up sensibility for indifference.

That

That heart can ne'er a transport know,
Which never felt a pain ;

and the transports I feel in one moment of felicity over-balance the pangs I endure in whole hours of inquietude.

I envy not the frigid philosopher who laughs at love, its pleasures and its pains ; and vainly attributes that apathy to the strength of his understanding, which is entirely owing to the coldness of his constitution.

I admire the old knight for his honour, and could hug him for his humanity.

I am glad — may I not be glad? — that your father frets and fumes so much : and only hope, that whenever he intends to make us unhappy, his intentions may in this manner be defeated. Disappointment in every scheme projected against his daughter's peace, is all the harm I

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wish

wish him ; and I think, by wishing him no more, I am very moderate in my resentment. — When avarice petrifies the heart, how strangely it prejudices the head ?

By bringing over your aunt to your interest, you have struck a blow of consequence ; and I congratulate you on the event. So powerful an ally is at this time a capital acquisition, and in a future attack may be of the utmost utility.

I AM as grateful as you can be to Providence, for delivering you from a marriage so devoutly to be dreaded ; and pray with great fervour, that you may always in a similar situation, meet with a similar deliverance.—You have cured me of my horrors, and I think as you would have me.

HARRY

HARRY is a wise man, and old D——
is a fool.—

You make me wild to be with you during this flowery season, and to enjoy at —— your raptures and your roses.— No Dutchman can be fonder of flowers than I am, — on this side idolatry, to which some romantic florists have carried their admiration.—As I am doomed to be pent up in a populous city, I cannot take so wide a survey of the beauties of nature as I would; but of those beauties, whenever they come in my way, I am never tired.—As my excursions are confined within a few miles of London, my views cannot be very extensive.

I AM delighted with the thoughts of your receiving so much amusement from Sophy's conversation, to which I, in a great measure, impute an agreeable airiness in the stile of your last letter, by which it is distinguished from the forego-

ing ones. But even that, unless your mind had been eased of the load of anxiety, would not, I know, have given such vivacity to your manner. — That Eliza may never more have the tranquility of her mind disturbed, is the sincere wish, and the perpetual prayer, of her

Ever-fond, and ever-faithful

EDWARD.



LETTER XII.

ELIZA TO EDWARD.

FOR the tranquility of Edward's mind Eliza prays with equal sincerity and equal fervour. — Now you are all I wish you to be, but . . . Fill up this blank with your own hand. —

WILL

WILL you believe me when I tell you that Billy is grown a mighty [hunter?— He is absolutely a Nimrod.—Five-barred gates, which used to be so formidable, are now nothing in his way. Who would have expected such an alteration in a man of his slight make and softness of manners?— He spent an hour with us this morning, and during the course of the conversation, which you may be sure turned upon his (present) favourite topic; I told him that I wondered how one of his delicate constitution could go through the fatigues of the field with such alacrity. “ Madam (said he, with his usual sententiousness), “ hunting is the “ only amusement which is a relief from “ business; the only relaxation without “ softness; the only diversion which “ gives a lively pleasure without languor, “ alloy, or satiety.” To these assertions I could not give my assent, and was therefore silent; for Billy is the last man with whom I would dispute, especially on

D 3

hunting,

hunting, since on that subject I should certainly be *thrown out*. But I should not be surprized to hear that, while he is relieving himself from business, and relaxing his mind in the pursuit of a fox, he finishes his lively pleasures with a broken neck.—This anecdote of Billy will divert you, I dare say ;—as you are acquainted with the animal, and all his inconsistencies.—This stroke in his character will, however, be quite new.

ELIZA.

LET-



L E T T E R XIII.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

THE transition from a frible to a fox-hunter is strange ;—'tis "passing strange !"—I wonder, as Billy is always, Proteus-like, shifting his shape, what will be his next metamorphosis. I never knew a more inconsistent animal, as you justly call him. I wish you would dress up 'a little story, on his appearing in so many different and distinct characters ; for, from the sketches I have seen of your poetical abilities, I am sure it would be prettily *Ovidian*.

I CAME home last night very much vapoured, from a very agreeable visit.—

D 4

Yes,

Yes, Eliza, I repeat it, vapoured. I spent the afternoon with the amiable * * * * s, who, though they have been married five years, are totally strangers to that tædium of which thousands joined together in matrimony, heavily complain within the twelve-month. — The conjugal felicity of this uncommon pair is rather strengthened than weakened by time ; and from their constant assiduities to endear themselves to each other, there is no reason to doubt of its duration to the end of their lives.—Fanny was making a frock for a very pretty miniature of herself, and my friend was enjoying the playful simplicity of a little cherub-faced boy, his own representative in a larger size, who by his inarticulate prattle gave his father a pleasing opportunity to interpret his meaning ; while Fanny took equal pleasure to make the lisplings of her daughter intelligible.—A more agreeable family-piece I never beheld !—Such views of domestic life always fill me with delight,

light, but at the same time stir up a passion in my breast which robs it of its tranquillity. — Envy, — Eliza, envy, is the passion which wounds my peace, when I survey a scene of domestic felicity ; — but my envy is free from malignity, for I never desire to disturb it. — When shall *we* be united ? — Is there no hope, no prospect of success ? — I do not sink under the frowns of Fortune, — but I *must* sigh for her smiles. — Sighs are involuntary, and will not be suppressed. — I will not shock the ears of Eliza with fruitless exclamations, but I *must* sigh. — Did I not thus anxiously wish for the completion of my desires, I should not deserve your love ; for I should not set a proper value on it. — The *inspired only* in love or poetry, *feel* the passion : and those will express it with a warmth peculiar to themselves. — You have *inspired* me with the first ; and all my fallies of sensibility are proofs of your power over my heart. —

WHAT

WHAT a different picture of matrimony from that above painted is exhibited by Tom W—— and his wife !—Tom eats, drinks, and sleeps, but never thinks. — He is all *body*. He has a pair of large wall-eyes without any expression in them, and a couple of fat, flabby cheeks that would put a trumpeter to the blush. You expect no sagacity in such a face, and you are not disappointed. There is not a syllable in it.—He *looks* nothing. A dog has as many ideas, and an elephant compared with him is a *Newton*.

MRS. W——, his *amiable* moiety, is *tout au contraire*, both without and within.—She has a sharp, sensible face, and seems to look *through* every body she looks *at* ; is never happy but when she is reading ; thanks God a thousand times in a day that she is born with a soul superior to the common herd of women ; talks perpetually of the dignity of human nature ; and treats Tom with a most cordial contempt

tempt for the paucity of his ideas, and the depravity of his taste.—Tom loves to enjoy his friends, and indulge his genius over a bottle; his intellectual wife hates to do the honours of a table; and if she is engaged on a favourite subject, you might as well move the Monument as draw her from her dressing-room.—With such opposite tempers and different pursuits, how should they be happy?

You tell me I am all you wish me to be, but —— I have filled up the blank.—What pleasure you give me by thus wishing with that *but*, for a removal of the obstacles which prevent our union!

ANOTHER alarm'—— A paragraph in this morning's paper has just struck my eye:—"We are credibly informed that a treaty of marriage is on foot, and will speedily be consummated, between Sir Charles T —— and ——" Let me not blot this sheet with the sequel.—I have

have torn the paper in a thousand pieces. Oh Eliza ! pity my perplexity, — disperse my doubts, — and relieve me from the agony of suspense.—Thorns will be planted in my pillow till I hear from you. —There lives not on earth a man more comfortless at this moment, than

EDWARD.



LETTER XIV.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

MORE horrors !

O fye, Edward, fye, Edward, fye !

You deserve the perplexity you feel for your credulity and precipitation ; — for your hastiness in believing every thing which is destructive of your repose. —

Till you correct that self-tormenting propensity

penfity in your difpofition, you will never be happy : for even the completion of your wifhes would not be the conclufion of your cares.—You know what wifhes and what cares I mean.—Pay a proper regard to this advice, and tear no more news-papers.

NEVER were two matrimonial pictures better contrasted.—Sophy and I enjoyed them both ; for a marriage of happinefs and a marriage of infelicity are exhibited by your descriptive pencil with equal expreffion.—How worthy of imitation are the * * * *s ! how unenviable are the W——s ! Tom and his wife are fuch laughable objects, that they would make admirable figures in a farce.

I HAVE more than once viewed the amiable groupe, and always dwell on them with delight. I very much interefted myfelf in bringing my agreeable friends together ; and it is therefore with a particular

particular pleasure that I hear of their mutual love and growing affection.—No people ever entered into the marriage-state with better dispositions, and more flattering prospects; and from the few but strong marks which you have given of their domestic characters, I am very much inclined to believe, that their happiness will be as permanent as it is pure. How rarely now such pairs in wedlock meet! —Whenever *we* so meet, I hope we shall meet like *them*;—and by following their example, deserve their felicity.

READING the fifth book of the Paradise Lost, the other day, I was shocked with the following passage :

Evil into the mind of God or man
May come and go ————— and leave
No spot or blame behind —————

Book v. ver. 117.

Is not this a strange passage in a divine poem?—I would read,

Evil into the mind of a good man
May come and go ——— &c.

By this slight alteration, the absurdity of attributing evil to an all-good Being is totally removed.

Am I not a bold woman thus to attack your favourite bard with all the presumptory pomp of a professed critic? However, I submit my alteration to your superior judgment — make much of this compliment — and should be glad to know if we think alike upon this *critical* occasion.—

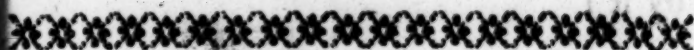
By supposing that I can dress up an Ovidian story with Ovidian prettiness, you over-rate my poetical abilities.

SIR

SIR Charles — arrived yesterday at his Place in this neighbourhood. He is just returned from his travels, and is a very pretty gentleman, with out having the least dash of the coxcomb in him.—'Tis whispered that he is going to make his addresses to a Lady of your acquaintance who, you may be sure, is excessively envied by all her *dear friends* on that account but as I have a great regard for her, I wish she may fix his fluttering heart.

ELIZA

LET



LETTER XV.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

I STAND corrected for my impetuosity, and will endeavour to check it for the future :—

Can a mortal do more ?

THE demolition of a news-paper was, I confess, a puerile revenge ; but will you not also own that the paragraph which occasioned it, was very provoking to a man of my *susceptibility* ? — Excellent Eliza ! — You have rallied me into a reasonable way of thinking ; and I hope I shall improve by the admonitions of so sincere an instructress. — How happy should I be with your equal disposition ; and from how

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many anxious hours should I be relieved by it !

I MUST correct *you* a little. — The cares which so often interrupt my repose, would *certainly* be removed by the completion of my desires.—

YOU are sly, Eliza. By the studied obscurity at the conclusion of your letter, you intended, no doubt, to try whether I should again expose myself to your raillery.—I should, I believe, have given you an opportunity to laugh at me, had I not accidentally heard of Sir Charles's intentions, before the receipt of it. I wish, as well as you, that *the lady* may fix his heart ; and have no dislike to him for a cousin, though I could not think of him, with patience, as a competitor.

SIR Charles, for I can now launch out with pleasure in his praise, is, as you say, a very pretty gentleman.—He has not, by
making

making the tour of Europe, travelled himself into a contempt for his own country; but is as staunch an Englishman as ever. —How different from the young fellows of the age, of his figure and fortune, but without his learning and elegant accomplishments, who, *smit with the love of seeing foreign parts*, hurry over to the continent, like silly school-boys, and throw away their money, and so make themselves more extensively ridiculous?—The man of taste and understanding receives from travel considerable advantages; he improves the first, and enlarges the last; but he who sets out a fool, always returns a coxcomb

WITH regard to the passage which you pointed out from the *Paradise Lost*, I am quite of your opinion. Supposing that the author meant by the word *God*, the Creator of the world, the absurdity is then obvious. But on looking into Dr. Newton's edition I found the following note,

by which I think the seeming absurdity is ingeniously removed.

“ *God* here must signify *Angel*, as it frequently does in this poem. For *God* cannot be tempted with evil,” as St. James says (Chap. i. v. 13.) of the Supreme Being. And Milton had just before (as Mr. Thyer also observes) used the term *God* in the same meaning ; verse 59.

Deigns none to ease thy load and taste thy
sweet,

Nor God, nor man ?

AGAIN, verse 70,

—Yet able to make Gods of men.

You have proved yourself, however, an accurate reader ; and you will give me great pleasure by transmitting to me every remark you make on every book which comes in your way.

I WENT

I WENT last night, with our very agreeable friends, Mr. and Mrs. D——, to the Provoked Husband, and was highly entertained with that admirable comedy.— Though I have seen it often, I am never tired with it. As the characters are accurately copied from real life, they will always exist, and consequently always please the lovers of nature. Provoked husbands are every day to be met with, and wrong-headed journies to London are every day undertaken. The play was very well performed upon the whole.— Yates entered into the spirit of Sir *Francis* with his usual fidelity. He strictly adheres to the character he assumes, and never departs from it to introduce *himself*. To make an audience laugh, is within the abilities of every buffoon who can twist his face into a thousand fantastic shapes, and throw out a thousand impertinent tones ; but to make them laugh in the right place, in the only place where they *should* laugh, without contortion of coun-

tenance, and a ridiculous flexibility of voice, is in the power only of him who has thoroughly studied his character, and *feels* it.

IN my boyish days, I remember, I was wonderfully delighted with tragedies; the deeper the better. The old Roman dresses charmed me, and the pompous perriwigs of the then strutting heroes made them appear to me *prodigious*.—While drapery struck my eyes, and declamation thundered my ears, I stared, I listened, and I was happy. My attention was too much attached to scenery and sound, to pay any regard to sentiment.—The most affecting situation only made me yawn. — But now, the case is altered.—The distressful scenes I have beheld in real life, have rendered me unable to bear the representation of them upon the stage.—The eye is melted, when the heart is moved.—For tragedies therefore I have lost all relish, and from the exhibition

hibition only of the comic pieces receive all my theatrical entertainment.

TOM W—— and his wife are, as you observe, excellent figures for a farce. I wish they were sufficiently known, and of sufficient consequence, for the stage. If they were in high life, Foote would certainly start them with high humour in the Hay-Market.

I SHALL be very glad to hear what progress Sir Charles makes in his addresses ; for I am now in those addresses *agreeably* interested.—If Sophy stands not in her own light, she may be Lady T——, and happily settled, if she has no pre-engagement to embarrass her.—Nothing but that can, I think, oppose her happiness ; for she is mistress of her fortune, and has no relations to influence or controul her. She has no *father*. — That word calls up a train of thoughts which — Oh ! Eliza,

—when will there be an end to the anxieties of

EDWARD.



LETTER XVI.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

YOU did right to check yourself at the word *father*. — In spite of his unkind behaviour to me, he is still my father; and though he undesignedly takes pains to weaken my filial affection, my filial duty shall be ever irreproachable. — To his care of my education I am indebted for the little knowledge I am mistress of, and the few accomplishments I possess. But more particularly am I indebted to his paternal care for instilling into my mind the purest precepts of morality and religion, and for animating me to the practice of them, by his own example. These are obligations never to be

be forgotten ; these are debts, Edward, never to be discharged.

I AGREE with you entirely with regard to the Provoked Husband, and could write sheets of paper in its praise.—It frequently affords me great entertainment in the closet ; but from what I have heard of the original performers, I am afraid I shall never see it done justice to throughout in the representation. Lord Townly, in particular, is a character which gives so few opportunities for the mere player to shew his theatrical powers, that, excepting in the last act, very few have appeared in it to any advantage. The man who hopes to perform the part of Lord Townly with propriety, must derive his accomplishments both from nature and art. If he is not happy in having a good figure, and has not, by keeping the best company, acquired a genteel carriage and a graceful address, he will make a contemptible appearance in those scenes in which

which he has little to say and little to do.—In short, the actor should be lost in the gentleman. — Of this cast is Sir Charles Easy, a character which I have not yet seen performed with *ease*; and I believe you will be puzzled to point out a man fit to undertake it.—In another letter, I may, perhaps, send you my sentiments on other stage-characters; but at present my head is running on real ones.

SOPHY will not, I dare say, stand in her own light; but there is an obstacle which stands between her and Sir Charles, and which may perhaps prevent the union of two people who seem to be made for each other's happiness. This obstacle is a rich unmarried uncle, from whom Sir Charles has very flattering expectations.—Family-pride is the ruling passion of this old gentleman, and he opposes his nephew's intended alliance with all the obstinacy peculiar to those who are infatuated with that passion. Sophy has beauty,

ty, merit, and fortune ; but as her birth is not brilliant, she is not thought *consequential enough* for the Lady of Sir Charles T—. Is not this same family-pride very ridiculous ? I mean only when there is a ridiculous stress laid upon it.—I am quite out of humour with the absurd old fellow, and wish heartily that Sophy —— The agreeable girl is just come into the room out of breath, and has therefore, I am sure, something of importance to utter : —I *must* stop to hear what she says.—

O Lizzy !— Sir Charles is a charming man ; — the best creature in the world.—Read this letter, and you will not wonder that I am so flurried ; I was never in such a way in my life.”

“ To Miss Sophia ——.

“ MADAM,

“ I AM just come from my uncle, after a long and serious conference with him, in which I endeavoured by all the rea-

“ son

“ son and rhetoric in my power, to re-
“ concile him to the choice I have made
“ and to receive his assent to an alliance
“ from which I promise myself the highest
“ felicity: but his ruling passion grew
“ stronger by opposition, and his preju-
“ dices were too deep-rooted to be re-
“ moved.——I should have been glad of
“ his consent on this occasion, because I
“ have had on every other his approba-
“ tion.——As I cannot procure *that*, I
“ will indulge my own ruling-passion,
“ and enjoy my own prejudices, the first
“ of which is as strong, and the last as
“ immoveable as he can be.——As he is
“ very rich, I naturally formed pleasing
“ expectations; but these expectations
“ are all at an end; for he declared with
“ vehemence, when I took leave of
“ him, that he would distribute every
“ thing he was possessed of among hospitals
“ and alms-houses, if I pursued my in-
“ tentions to degrade my family.—Poor
“ man! — he thought not how much

“ he

he degraded himself by that peevish speech. — My own happiness is now the only point I have in view ; to facilitate my progress to which point you only have the power, and I hope, therefore, your inclination will not be wanting. — I wait with impatience to call you mine for ever.—

CHARLES T.—”

WAS not Sophy right to say that Sir Charles was a charming man ? and can you wonder at her flurries ?——There is but *one* man in the world who would, I think, have acted the same part in a similar situation.—As my dear cousin’s affairs are now in so good a train, I hope in a short time to congratulate her on her appearance in a new character on the stage of life, to perform which with propriety and spirit she has many natural and acquired advantages.

I VASTLY

I VASTLY like the description you give of your feelings in your boyish days at tragic representations. The description is so lively, that I can see you staring away and listening with the most eager attention to the declamatory speeches of perriwig-pated heroes, who depended chiefly on their lungs and their robes, their truncheons and their plumes, for the applause of the audience.

I HAVE just read Johnson's *Rasselas*; there are beauties in almost every page: but they appear to me like so many shining excrescences, and would make a better figure, I think, if they were drawn together in a body, than they now do, straggling without connection in several parts. The descriptions are rich, and the sentiments strongly expressed; but as all the characters are disappointed in their searches after happiness, I rose dissatisfied from the perusal; and the more so, as the author

thor has finished his book without a conclusion.

You desired me, in a former letter, to send my remarks on every thing I read to you; and you shall always find me ready to comply with your request.

You have brought off your favourite bard with flying colours; but perhaps you may not defend him so ingeniously from my next attack.

ELIZA.

LET.



LETTER XVII.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

IT gives me great pleasure to hear that Sophy's affairs are in so fine a way; and I sincerely wish that she may always find the felicity she deserves.—I admire the behaviour of Sir Charles, and esteem him more than ever for it;—I hope there are many men who would have acted the same part in the same situation, notwithstanding your *partial* compliment.

JACK H—— is grown quite a Buck;—you would hardly know him: he has lost all that sobriety of aspect, modesty of manners, and decency of dress, for which you so much regarded him.—He spends his days in dissipation, and his nights in debauchery.

debauchery, and is never happy but when he is revelling with the choice spirits of the age, who tell you with an air of triumph, that they make the most of life, at the same time that they are sapping the foundations of it. The sober part of mankind, however, are not in the least convinced of the cogency of their arguments by the consequences of their conduct. If riot and extravagance, with every species of modern licentiousness, actually tend to increase the number of our days, and promote our terrestrial happiness, the fellows of frolic and fire would induce us to adopt their opinions, and to follow their example. But as we see daily so many of them snatched from their scenes of pleasure, and blasted in their bloom; they give us no encouragement to pursue their footsteps, lest we should meet their fate; and like them prove by our practice, that we are making the *least* of life, when we think we are making the *most*.—These reflections, occasioned by the transforma-

66 LETTERS BETWEEN

tion of our friend Jack, bring to my mind a ballad which I struck off some years ago, on reviewing a similar character.—

Come, bring t'other flask, 'tis a folly to flinch,
While the moments are posting away ;
Since life is but short, I'll enjoy ev'ry inch,
And will merrily moisten my clay.

Let the mortified sages with faces as long
As my arm, look like *frights* if they will ;
I think, with their gloom, that they are all in
the wrong ;
And of gladness will here take my fill.

Let the muzzy old dons, who for joy have no
taste.

By themselves sit, as studied as bricks ;
With such moping dull milk-sops my time I'll
ne'er waste,
But with Mirth and his myrmidons mix.

We

We will booze away care ; we will laugh away
sorrow,

And like Bucks, live as long as we can ;

To-day is our own, but the fate of to-morrow
Was never imparted to man.

Let the flask then go briskly with spirits around ;

Let us bury in bumpers all care ;

Let the night be with jest and with jollity
crown'd ;

Let us drink till like devils we stare.

By the grapes gen'rous nectar grown heartily
mellow,

To his friends of the bottle and bowl,

A jolly, red-letter'd face, frolicksome fellow

Thus sorrow defied———like a *soul*.

YOUR remarks on *Rasselas* are judicious : I prefer more chearful compositions.

—My own disappointments naturally incline me to be rather too gloomy ; I want not to make myself more so by poring over the disappointments of others.—In spite of all my efforts to drive away disquiet-

ing thoughts, they *will* return, and “murder sleep.”—Often, very often, are the hours which should be devoted to rest, wasted in vain wishes and fruitless complaints.—Are not *you* now and then, by the intrusion of similar thoughts, robbed of your repose?—I am sure you are, because I am sure your affection for me is sincere; as sincere as mine is for you:—our feelings therefore must *sometimes* be very much alike.—You are, I grant, of a more calm and composed disposition (happy disposition!) than I am, and bear your vexations with more fortitude.—But with all the calmness, composure, and fortitude of a philosopher, you *must* feel them like a *woman*.

WHEN I am in a dull desponding humour,—too frequently am I in that humour,—I have recourse to the wild productions of uncommon geniusses, which are full of extravagant flights, in order to disperse my foggy reflections, and generally find

find the greatest relief from the most romantic compositions. Sometimes the ridiculous conceits and gross absurdities even of a contemptible author have the desired effect, and by operating powerfully on my muscles, remove all melancholy ideas.—In the heroic poems of Blackmore I always find passages very happily calculated for the dispersion of the above-mentioned reflections, and the promotion of risibility.—

Is not the following comparison, taken from Prince Arthur, curious?—The author is describing whales spouting:—

Like some prodigious water-engine, made
To play on heav'n, if fire should heav'n invade.

Is it not evident, by the coldness of this couplet, that the poetic fire never invaded Sir Richard's breast?—However, greater poets than our knight, by abusing the hyperbole, are as justly liable to censure on

that account. Homer and Virgil afford instances of the ridiculous, as well as Blackmore and ———. The first, describing a storm in his *Odyssy*, tells us, in order to give strength to his description, that all the four winds together were concerned in it. If Homer had consulted a common sailor before he finished his description, it would have been more agreeable to nature. — Unnatural, however, as this contention of blasts, in direct opposition to each other, must appear to every accurate reader, the servile author of the *Æneid* has not only copied but exceeded the extravagance of his master on a similar occasion.—His winds not only blow all together, but

“ From its lowest bed upturn the foam.”

IN this manner, Eliza, the greatest poets, by attempting to be superlatively sublime, instead of raising our ideas, only excite our mirth.

I AM

I AM much pleased with a passage in Sir Charles's letter. — " Poor man! he
" thought not how much he degraded
" *himself* by that peevish speech ;"——
and may perhaps throw together a few
thoughts on family - pride in a future
epistle.—It is now high time to conclude
this, for I think I have wrote a *monstrous*
deal.—And so, adieu,

EDWARD.

P. S. Remember me to Sophy.—

LET-



LETTER XVIII.

ELIZA, TO EDWARD.

YOUR last miscellaneus letter gave me a great deal of pleasure. It was of a comfortable length, and I hope you will let me have more of them, You cannot make them too long.

DID I not know that you have more of the milk-sop than the Mohock in your composition, I should set you down for a very formidable buck; you have with so much spirit marked that contemptible character in your Bacchanalian ballad, which is extremely well calculated for the court of Comus, and which I read with double satisfaction, by reflecting that while you wrote it, you despised the object who occasioned it.—

You

You amaze me with the metamorphosis
 of Jack — into a buck. — Who would
 have thought it? I shall wonder at nothing
 for the future. — The soberest creature I
 ever knew. But suppose his connec-
 tions with ——— and ——— have con-
 tributed to his transformation. — How
 many worthy and sober young fellows are
 ruined by their connections? How care-
 ful, therefore, ought they to be in the
 choice of their companions? Those who
 are of a social, of a convivial turn, should
 be particularly cautious, because they are
 most likely to be thrown off their guard
 in the moment of frolic and festivity. —
 You, Edward, by chusing your com-
 panions with discretion, have had no
 reason to repent of your connection with
 them. — But in this age of luxury and
 dissipation, a man of your taste and tem-
 per cannot expect to form many agree-
 able intimacies with his own sex. — I am
 sorry to add, that the present licentiousness
 of behaviour in the female world prevents

me

me from contracting many agreeable ones with mine.—

My chief delight of the social kind arises from the conversation of a few suitable, sensible friends, and the free interchange of sentiments on improving as well as amusing subjects. I never could bear the detached incoherent small talk in a mixed assembly; being somewhat of the Irish-man's opinion who said, that talking spoils conversation. Such talking certainly does; for when a dozen people are eagerly wasting their breath on a dozen different subjects, your ears are worried with a confusion of sounds, and you return from your visit tired to death with the lively dullness of it. Don't find fault with the opposition of those winds for I assure you I have returned from a room full of very lively people, as dull as a post; from people who, separately, would have given me the highest entertainment by their company.

No

No longer ago than last night did I come home from Mr. T—s in this dismal condition;—stupid to the last degree, and fit for nothing:—for to nothing could I settle, so crowded was my head with a multitude of clashing ideas, which entirely destroyed attention, and indeed for several hours deprived me of rest; for I could not, amidst a confusion of thoughts, close my eyes.—The conversation which passes among a few select agreeable friends, one remembers distinctly; and the remembrance is attended with pleasing reflections; but from such a visit as I endured—I cannot say enjoyed—last night—Such a medley of mortals were never surely huddled together!—Mrs. T—has the strangest turn of any woman I ever met with, for clumping people together, the most unsuitable to each other.—She has no notion of sorting her acquaintance; if she can cover her carpet she is satisfied, and is not over-nice with regard to their morals.—If they have fine cloaths, they are

are very good company.—Your old acquaintance Lucy — was there, and is, I think, more given to loquacity than ever.— She always talked fluently; but I never heard her talk so fast in my life.——No subject comes amiss to her; she knows every thing and every body, and runs on from dress to diversions, from the most serious events to the most comic occurrences, with such a ridiculous rapidity — and you know what a hoarse, coarse voice she has—that her tongue still rattles in my ear. Ben Johnson, in his *Silent Woman*, described *such* a character with true humour.

Oh! rid me of this torture quickly there,
My madam with the everlasting voice:
The bells in time of pestilence ne'er made
Like noise, as were in that perpetual motion.

———— All my house [breath
But now steamed like a bath with her thick
A lawyer could not have been heard, nor scarce
Another woman: such a hail of words
She has let fall.—

At

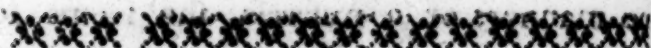
AT the assembly last Wednesday, Miss N— was the most striking figure.—She is a fine showy girl, and has a great deal of dignity in her presence ; but dresses her head in so peculiar a style, and tosses that head about so many different ways, in order to distinguish herself, that she is called by some the blowzy beauty, and by others the handsome hoyden.—Was she but contented with the beauties which nature has kindly bestowed on her, she would appear to the greatest advantage ; but by her acquired graces she very much weakens the force of her natural attractions.—She met with a shocking mortification, which occasions much mirth at all the tea-tables in the neighbourhood, and poor Charlotte has looked very silly ever since. A very handsome young fellow, genteely dressed, who had all the appearance of a man of fashion, singled her out for his partner ; and thereby made her so happy for the evening, that she could not help discovering the high satisfaction she

she felt, by looking with an insolent air of triumph on every other woman in the room.—Her triumph, however, was at an end soon after the conclusion of the scene which occasioned it; for her charming partner, when he handed her to her coach, hoped, in the most submissive manner, that he might have the honour to be—her mercer. Was not this a mortifying speech? — Charlotte felt it severely, and has been so laughed at about her disappointment that I question whether her pride will suffer her to appear again in a place in which she met with such a disgrace; a disgrace which will, if she has the understanding I think she has, have a good effect on her, and make her more cautious in her conduct, and more discreet in her carriage.—She does not want sense; but a little more solidity would be of infinite service to her.—The love of admiration is evidently her ruling passion; and the air which she assumes in order to be admired, “beggars all description.”

cription." In short, by the very methods she takes to forward her designs, she, like a true coquet, defeats them: and as she by every movement she makes affects the manners of a mistress, she seems to take great pains to render herself unfit for a wife.—I mean not a modern wife; for no woman would make a better figure in that character, in the fashionable world; but according to our ideas of the conjugal state, no woman would make a worse. There is not I believe a more undomestic creature breathing. So much for Charlotte,—on whom I have dwelt so long, that I trust you will be heartily glad to find a transition to another subject.—You will undoubtedly think that I have borrowed some of lively Lucy's spirits, not being able, otherwise, to account for the length of this epistle. It is indeed longer than usual; but when a woman's pen, as well as her tongue, is once set a-going—But I *will* have compassion
on

on you, and put a stop to my rambling and reveries.

ELIZA.



LETTER XIX.

EDWARD TO ELIZA.

MANY, many thanks, Eliza, for the sprightly contents of your last letter, with which I was truly comforted; and to the pleasure I received from it, the length of it not a little contributed.— Pray proceed in character-drawing; for you have a happy hand that way. Lucy is the very woman you paint her, and from what I have heard of Charlotte, your picture of her is not *over-charged*.

YOUR quotation from the *Silent Woman* is very lucky—You could not have pitched upon a more apposite passage.—

I am

I am particularly pleased with this line in it.

—Steam'd like a bath with her *thick breath*.—

I HAVE not seen the lively Rattle a great while, and you give me no encouragement to wish to come within the sound of her “everlasting voice.”—How happy am I, that *my madam* is so totally unlike her!—May I not call Eliza so without offence?—You need never make apologies for being in spirits; for I am sure you will never give offence by a *bail of words*:—Well said, *Old Ben*!

I SPENT the evening a few nights ago with an old friend whom I have not seen for some years.—He is one of the most companionable men I ever conversed with. With a large share of natural sense improved by a liberal education, and increased by a knowledge of the world, he has a most enviable memory, by which, as

he is a very diligent searcher after anecdotes, he is always entertaining. — The following story, which he communicated, relating to Colonel —, who was killed during the war in Germany, is so extremely curious, that I committed it to writing as soon as he left me for your amusement. A more singular one, perhaps, you never read.—‘ The colonel, ‘ it seems, when he was only an ensign, ‘ with a very small fortune of his own, ‘ being quartered in Scotland, fell in love ‘ there with a young lady, who besides ‘ many personal charms and elegant accomplishments, had a considerable fortune in her own power; and had soon ‘ the happiness to find himself distinguished from the numerous train of her ‘ admirers, with peculiar marks of politeness; of which he availed himself ‘ with so much success, that in a short ‘ time he distanced all his competitors, ‘ and appeared to be, evidently, the object of her affections.—As there was, ‘ however,

* however, a very great disapprobation
 * between them in point of fortune, the
 * lady, being apprehensive that he only
 * made his addreses to her for the sake of
 * her money, employed a stratagem, in
 * order to see if those apprehensions were
 * well founded. Accordingly, when the
 * colonel made her a visit one morning,
 * and entered her apartment with his usu-
 * al gaiety and good-humour, he found
 * her bathed in tears, and sighing as if
 * her heart would burst.—Struck at so
 * new a sight, he could scarce believe his
 * eyes.—He flew to her, and with all
 * the anxiety of a sincere lover, intreated
 * her to tell him the cause of her disqui-
 * etude, which seemed almost insupporta-
 * ble.—She wept bitterly, and was very
 * loth to comply with his earnest intrea-
 * ties; but after many repeated impor-
 * tunities, frequent pauses and hesitations,
 * she told him that she was——ruined:
 * that by the failure of a merchant who
 * had the greatest part of her fortune in his
 G 2 ‘ hands,

‘ hands, she was reduced to a mortifying
‘ situation. — She delivered herself in so
‘ pathetic a manner, and seemed to be so
‘ forcibly affected with the loss she had
‘ sustained, that the colonel had no doubt
‘ of the truth of her narrative; but as-
‘ suring her that the alteration in her
‘ fortune made no change in his affec-
‘ tion, told her in a transport, (which I
‘ am afraid few would have felt on a si-
‘ milar occasion) that he thanked heaven
‘ for giving him an opportunity to prove
‘ the sincerity of his heart; and with more
‘ eagerness than ever, pressed her to com-
‘ plete his happiness by consenting imme-
‘ diately to the union of their hands. —
‘ This generous behaviour in her lover
‘ threw her into such a rapture of joy,
‘ that she dropped the mask directly.
‘ Her counterfeited tears instantly disap-
‘ peared, and the little Loves and Graces
‘ again played around her face. — “ Now
“ Sir, said she, it is my turn to be ge-
“ nerous, and to follow so good an ex-
“ ample.

“ ample. You have sufficiently proved
 “ the sincerity of your attachment to me,
 “ and I should tax myself with ingrati-
 “ tude, as well as insensibility, did I keep
 “ you a moment longer in suspense.—
 “ Know then, sir, that there is no al-
 “ teration in my fortune, for the sake of
 “ which I thought you might have made
 “ your addresses to me; and therefore
 “ was willing to try, by a little strata-
 “ gem whether you was urged to those
 “ addresses by real affection, or a mer-
 “ cenary passion.—You have convinced
 “ me by the openness of your behaviour
 “ that you was prompted by the first, and
 “ not instigated by the last. All therefore
 “ that I have is too little for a man who
 “ has given such striking proofs of the
 “ sincerity of his passion, by the purity
 “ of his principles.—My hand, my heart,
 “ is yours.”—“ No, madam, replied he,
 “ with a cold, steady look, I can never
 “ have a good opinion of the heart of
 “ the woman who has deceived me; and

“ fore to such a woman will never give
“ my hand.—I have ever, from my in-
“ fancy, paid such a regard to truth,
“ that the least divination from it more
“ than excites disapprobation, it provokes
“ abhorrence.—Farewell for ever.”——
‘ This severe reproof and final adieu had
‘ so fatal an effect on her, that she imme-
‘ diately lost the use of her reason, and
‘ died soon afterwards in the agonies of
‘ distraction.’ — Can he who occasioned
those agonies be defended? — Humanity
says no.—

If I had met with this story in a modern book, I should have thought it fabulous; but strange as it is, I believe it is no fiction;—for my friend was intimately acquainted with the colonel, and is not at all addicted to romantic narrations; though his stories, I must own, sometimes stagger probability. Pray let me have your remarks on the above curious anecdote,

and

and tell me too, what Sophy thinks of the colonel's extreme delicacy.—

By your saying nothing of Sophy and her swain, I suppose that matrimonial matters are drawing to a conclusion: and I hope they will meet with no bar to their conjugal bliss. — Happy Sir Charles! thrice happy Sophy!—I envy not your approaching felicity; but I cannot think of its approximation without lamenting my own luckless fate, and throwing out a few exclamations against — But what avails empty exclamations? — On this subject, Eliza, if I express myself with too much warmth, blame me not for it.—— I should not deserve your love, if while I bore the interruptions to my happiness like a philosopher, I did not also feel those interruptions like a man.—

I FREQUENTLY shift the scene to prevent gloomy thoughts from preying upon my mind, and thereby endangering my
 G 4 health;

health; and the chearful conversation of my friends for a while exclude them: but when I retire to rest, they return with double force, "making night hideous." —I am in a miserable muzz, and must therefore lay down my pen.

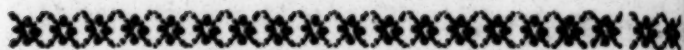
I HAVE been looking over some of your letters, and have read myself into good spirits again. I see things in a more chearful light, and the flatterer Hope again takes full possession of me.—By your father's not molesting you with his importunities, I please myself with thinking that time may make a change in his disposition favourable for us; and that we shall, with his consent, be happy in each other.—Whenever that joyful day arrives, the recollection of past disappointments will increase its festivity.—What strange mortals we lovers are! Always in the vapours, or forming visionary scenes.—But there is a pleasure in castle-building, which none but castle-builders know; and

EDWARD AND ELIZA. 89

and notwithstanding the ridicule thrown on us visionaries by your solemn fellows who laugh at the pleasures of imagination, I receive so much amusement from my airy fabricks that as fast as they fall, I raise up others instantly in their room.—Were it not for imagination, Eliza, I should in *your* absence be the most unhappy being upon earth.—Do I not write as if I was in love? have I not all the characteristic marks of that passion?——Hope, fear, doubt, despair, elevate, depress, perplex, and harrow me by turns, and agitate my heart ten thousand ways.—As I write in all humours, you see my heart in all its various situations, for I cannot conceal them if I would.—Adieu.

EDWARD,

LET-



LETTER XX.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

A CURIOUS story, indeed!—A more singular anecdote never came in my way:—but neither Sophy nor I can bear the colonel's *Delicacy*, do you call it? How is that word abused!—No, Edward, if he had been a man of true delicacy, he would have acted in a very different manner.—In short, your story seems to me so unnatural, that I cannot give credit to it.—I have the highest regard for those who have a respect for truth; but the deviation from it, in the lady's case, was, I think, a venial crime.—She had all the reason in the world, from his outward appearance, notwithstanding the order of his professions, to imagine that her fortune was the *first* object of his attention; and

and therefore made use of an innocent
 stratagem to try how far, with those pro-
 positions, his actions would correspond.—
 When both parties were so well satisfied
 of each other's sincerity, who would have
 expected so fatal a catastrophe?—You say
 that your friend's stories frequently stagger
 probability;—and this is, certainly, one
 of his staggering stories.—

YOUR supposition with regard to So-
 phy and her swain, is perfectly right :
 their interviews are frequent ; and from
 every interview they part more and more
 pleased with each other ; so that they have
 a very flattering prospect of conjugal fe-
 licity before them, from the enjoyment
 of which they are at present cruelly de-
 prived.—(I am sure I should think so, in
 their situation) — by their lingering law-
 suits.—How apt we are to wish to accele-
 rate or retard the flight of time, as the ob-
 ject we expect is agreeable or disgust-
 ing!—

You

YOU may as well spare you exclamations, and make yourself easy ; for——

OH Edward !—I have news to communicate, which will make you read this letter with rapture.—I have told you a thousand times never to despair.—“ Well “ but the news,—I am impatient—let “ me not burst with suspense,”—The news then is, that my father’s behaviour to me has of late been so much altered, that from the alteration in it, I flatter myself we shall have both reason to rejoice at it.—All his fondness for me seems to be returned ; and if he continues in his present disposition, I shall be tempted to renew the only subject on which we ever differed.—To what to ascribe the happy change in my father’s temper, I am at a loss ; but that my dear aunt has had a considerable share in it, I am very ready to believe ; for she has, I know, taken a great deal of pains to obviate all his objections to our union :—she has, indeed, been extremely kind on the occasion, and exerted

exerted herself with unusual vehemence
 for she is naturally of a mild, indolent
 (n) in my behalf. — To her activity,
 therefore, and zeal I attribute the alter-
 ation I see; and whether it will be attend-
 ed with the consequences I wish for and
 expect, the regard I always had for my
 friend will be doubled and trebled; and I
 will always with gratitude remember her
 affectionate assiduities on *my*, and I will
 add *your*, account: for you are a favourite
 of her's, I assure you; and were I to repeat
 the handsome things she has said of
 you, I should make you intolerably vain,
 and therefore I keep them to myself. —
 I am contented with knowing that she *did*
 say handsome things of you; and read this
 account of a new event if you can,
 without capering about the room, in the
 excessive flutter of your spirits; for you
 responding people are generally disposed,
 on any sudden gleam of joy, to express
 that joy by the most fantastic gesticula-
 tions: — such gesticulations therefore I ex-
 pect

pect from a man who is as much addicted to despondence as a mortified Methodist.—Pray excuse my vivacity—(you may perhaps call it levity)—at your expense but really I cannot check it.—Heigh ho!—What do you think that *beigh* means?—Something you may be sure for we women never make use of any expressions without a meaning.—I am in monstrous spirits to-day.—My heart is as light as a feather; peradventure you may say my head is so too.—If *I thought* that *you thought* I was ——— Whither am I running with my pen?—If you read all this scrawl with patience, you will out-do Epictetus all to nothing.—But come, 'tis time to put a stop to this tedious trifling, and so, (you know *who* is nobody without her “*and so*”) I jump to a conclusion.—

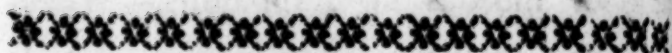
Your's, &c.

ELIZA.

P. S.

P. S. I hope this letter will drive away all your hideous night thoughts.—Whenever you are in a *muzz* you cannot do better than mix with chearful companions; and by their conversation shake off the fogs of spleen.—If chearful companions; are not always ready when you want their enlivening assistance, books fit for those purposes are always at hand.—I am rarely very much overpowered with vapours; but, under the pressure of them, nobody relieves me so quickly as Signor Ariosto.—There is a charming hurry in the ideas of this spirited Italian, and his extravagancies are so glorious, that I hardly know, when I am reading his *furious* poem, whether I am on the earth or in the moon.—

LET-



LETTER XXI.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

AND so you and Sophy have passed sentence on the colonel, and bring him in guilty of great unkindness at least, if not barbarity.—I am of your opinion entirely, that he was too rash in his resolutions; and that the lady's plot deserved a very different catastrophe.—

I HOPE to hear soon of the celebration of those nuptials which have been so long delayed, and shall be very glad to congratulate the amiable parties on the occasion.—

YOUR “Oh Edward!” gave me a great deal of pleasure,—and the intelligence
you

you communicated had the effect upon me
 that you imagined it would.—If a stran-
 ger, unacquainted with my way of ex-
 pressing excessive joy, had broken into my
 apartment during my *saltations*, he would
 have thought I had lived upon goat's
 milk — (you remember the *caprioling*
 gentleman in the *Spectator*). — Happy,
 happy change!—long may it continue;
 and may nothing arise to destroy the good
 dispositions your father is at present possess-
 ed of.—I shall always love your aunt for
 interesting herself so warmly for us, and
 hope her endeavours will be as successful
 as they are sincere:—such kindness ought
 to be remembered with gratitude, what-
 ever be the consequence of it.—Pray
 thank her heartily, from me, for the hand-
 some things she has said of me; and tell
 her I will do all in my power to merit her
 panegyricks.—Why do you apologize for
 your vivacity?—You are never, believe
 me, too lively;—I doat on your spirits,
 and wish I had such a flow.—However, I

am far less apt to sink into the horrors than I used to be, and attribute the chearful turn of my temper to your animating epistles: to make excuses, therefore, for such epistles, is absolutely needless.——

No more of them, Eliza,—if you love me:—and that you do love me, have I not received the most convincing proofs! —When you are in your *monstrous* spirits, you run on with your pen with such an agreeable rapidity, that I read what you write with a tumultuous satisfaction; and often, throwing up my eyes to heaven, cry out, “Charming creature!”—

You have in a few words happily struck off the character of Aristo.—I like your calling his Orlando a *furious* poem: for such it certainly is.—One would think our spirited poet was mounted on his *Ippogrifo*, so expeditiously does he transport you from one region to another, and so rapidly skip from incident to incident.—By this expedition and rapidity, and the multitude

multitude of tales related almost in the same instant, the reader's imagination is *vastly* embarrassed, and his attention *prodigiously* distracted. As you read him in the original, you have a pleasure which those who are not intimately acquainted with the Italian language can never receive: for no translator has been able to transplant the wild and luxuriant graces of our poet into his own. We have two English versions of the Orlando Furioso.—Sir James Harrington's is very flat frigid, and tiresome:—Mr. H—s's is below criticism. The first has more of the spirit of his author, but the latter is a more faithful interpreter; and though you cannot read his translation with any delight to your ear, it is a very useful book for *young beginners*, as a Dictionary, for its closeness.—

As I was tumbling the news-papers over this morning at the coffee house, a few thoughts darted into my head on those fugitive pieces with which we are so plenti-

fully supplied for the amusement of idle people, and the instruction of those who read nothing else: for much instruction, if knowledge may be called so, is to be acquired by these chronicles of the times.

AN English news paper is a curiosity which no other nation under the sun produces. The papers of intelligence which we receive from abroad are generally filled with such dull, dry articles, that a staunch *Quidnunc* would starve upon them, without the daily compositions of his *knowing* countrymen, which are kindly calculated for all capacities, from the highest to the lowest; and from the perusal of them all men, from the minister to the mumper, may receive useful hints.—Nay, we are so liberal of our advice that we give it as freely to **** himself, as to ———.

IN short, for wit and humour, good sense and nonsense, scurrility and scandal,
wild

wild projects and useful discoveries, bold truths, bankruptcies, and bloody murders, we beat the foreign gazettes all to nothing.—

WHEN I returned from the coffee-house, I found an invitation to dine with Sir Thomas ———, who entertains his friends in so very polite a style, that I never find any thing at his table that I can eat.— However, I accepted of his invitation, for the sake of his company, to which I never had any objection—I am a shocking fellow at an elegant entertainment, and generally starve in the midst of a modern feast. I have been so long accustomed to a few dishes, and a simple diet, that a table covered in the modern taste, though set off to the most luxurious advantage, gives me disgust instead of satisfaction.— My eye is puzzled in its choice, and my olfactory nerves perplexed by the variety of odours spreading around the room. I am not in the least fond of the apparatus for a

H 3

fashion-

fashionable feast, but rather chuse to sit down to a temperate repast than to an entertainment executed to the last degree of culinary perfection. — High-seasoned dishes, like high-scented flowers, afford a rich regale for a short time ; but the fumes of the one, and the fragrance of the other, if long continued, blunt the edge of appetite, and deaden all the powers of sensation. — The coarse food earned by labour has a flavour which those are not acquainted with whose palates are palled by meats sauced by the hand of Luxury ; and it has a peculiar recommendation, for it never cloyes by repetition. — The simple diet never cloyes us with satiety ; but the *villainous compounds* in the kitchens of the great, often introduce sickness with a surfeit. —

POOR D —, by the narrowness of his circumstances, is obliged to subsist on his poetical talents, which you know are

not

not very bright ; but he makes a shift just to keep himself from absolute want, by the exertion of them. As he has had a liberal education, he cannot condescend to undertake, nor indeed is he fit for, the common employments of life ; and his abilities are not of consequence enough to enable him to make a figure in higher occupations. — He is therefore become an author by profession ; and by dabbling a little in all branches of literature, procures a scanty subsistence.—

Hapless the poet, who, before he's fed,
Must *write*, and prostitute his pen for *bread*;
Doom'd to obey a publisher's decrees,
And vapid verses impotently squeeze.
Far, far more happy is the toiling swain,
Who *works*, without the labour of the brain ;
Who never knows the griefs which poets feel,
Hawking about—*Parnassus*——for a meal :—
But soundly sleeps upon a flinty bed,
Without or cares or couplets in his head.—
By verse few men have been to riches rais'd,
And for their *numbers*, *paid*, as well as prais'd :

Pope stands alone on the poetic list,
Who the plain road of plodding prose ne'er
mist ;
But like a bookseller his bargains made,
And laughed at all the *Lintots* of the trade.—

WHAT a medly have I written?
Eliza, 'tis my turn now to petition for a
patient perusal.—Pray take your revenge
the next time you write, and send me as
crouded a sheet. You cannot be too co-
pious.—

EDWARD.

P. S. I beg you would inform Mrs.
B—, that Mr. Oakley's boarding school, at
Bow, is the only place for the education
of young ladies ; for “ methods are used
there to dignify their sentiments without
severity.”—

LET-



L E T T E R XXII.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

HEARTILY am I glad that my lively letters give you so much pleasure. I have been lately in such extraordinary spirits, that I was afraid I should overpower you with them ; but you encourage me to lay no restraint upon them : you tell me that you wish you had such a *flow*.—By your last letter you seem to be in no want of vivacity ; and I hope nothing will happen to damp it.—My aunt is quite delighted with you, and hears all the passages I read to her with the utmost satisfaction.—Oh ! she is an excellent woman :—you don't know half her worth.—Very few are acquainted with her real value ; for she is contented with doing good without ostentation. She make no shining figure in the

the world, but she is truly illustrious notwithstanding.—

WE agree, I find, very well about the mad Italian poet; and your character of him is a good supplement to my little sketch.—Harrington's translation is, as you say, very tiresome.—I never could go through it.—Mr. H—s's I have never seen; nor, from your account, do I desire to peruse it.

YOUR observations on English newspapers made me smile; and when I came to your bundle of B's, I laughed out.—You will say I am very minute in my remarks; but it is a way I have sometimes:—pray excuse it.—I have just been reading the work of a very circumstantial author, who, being a favourite, has infected me, I believe; for I find in myself a wonderful tendency to take notice of little particulars, which, at another time, I should in all probability pass over.—

WHEN

WHEN I read of your invitation to Sir Thomas's table, "Poor Edward, said I, " what a day dost thou pass?" and could not help recollecting those beautiful lines in one of Pope's moral epistles, occasioned by a situation not much unlike yours; for he complains of being complaisantly helped to all he hated.——As you have Pope's Works, I need not crowd my letter with a long quotation, but beg you would turn to the description he gives of his entertainment at Cannons,——unless you remember it so thoroughly as not to forget a line of it; for the whole is charmingly worked up.——That word *Cannons*!——how powerful, Edward, is a single word?—It strikes me in a particular manner, and calls up a train of reflections on the emptiness and instability of all human grandeur.—Who can survey the spot where once triumphant stood that superb edifice, at once recollecting its rise and its destruction, without such reflections?—They will instantaneously force them-

themselves upon the mind of the contemplatist.—

A POOR poet is certainly a very pitiable object; and you have justly represented the ploughman as a happier being.—Scribbling,—especially rhyming,—seems to be a malignant disorder in the literary world; and the minor poets of the age are very busy in spreading the infection.—Never was bad poetry, or prose run mad, which you will, circulated with more fury.—I heartily pity the Monthly Reviewers, who are obliged to drudge thro' so many pages of *inanity*, in order to give their opinions of them; and wonder not that they treat the majority of authors with all the severity of criticism. If men without abilities will thrust themselves into the rank of literature, they can expect no quarter; nor do they deserve it.—

CHARLES and his wife are the happiest people in the world—every where but at home;

home; and are the most agreeable people in the world to every body—but to each other. They have so exquisite an aversion to matrimony that whenever they meet a very spirited conversation ensues in the most acrimonious style, but perfectly polite.—As they have both good capacities, and have both received a liberal education, they reproach each other with great elegance of expression; and in all their dialogues of altercation. their language is always classically fatirical.

Now I am upon matrimony, I must tell you that old H—makes himself more and more ridiculous every day, by the manner in which he treats his young wife; who, I think, deserves the mortifications she meets with, for throwing herself away upon such a wretch. He is the most absurd fellow I ever knew.—He takes great pleasure in seeing her dressed in the height of the fashion, and even grudges no expence for splendid ornaments :—but when she

she is tricked out fit to appear in a drawing-room, he locks her up in her own room, that no body may see her but himself.—This room of hers is crowded with pictures of all his mistresses, to which he frequently makes her attend, and insults her with their superior beauty.—Would such an oddity as this be tolerated upon the stage?—No surely;—it would be an affront to the audience to bring such a character before them.—

SOPHY's marriage is now most disagreeably delayed.—The dear girl was taken suddenly ill this morning; and, from certain symptoms, we are afraid of the small-pox; the more afraid are we of that shocking distemper, because the apprehension of it is so dreadful to herself.—Adieu.

ELIZA.

L E T-



LETTER XXIII.

EDWARD to ELIZA,

POOOR Sophy!—I wish you may be alarmed without reason; for if what you fear should come to pass, you will have too much reason to dread the consequences.—I am impatient to know farther about her, at this critical juncture, and hope you have been deceived in the symptoms.—

You justly complain of the scribblers of the present age.—Pope found the writers of his time very troublesome, when he wrote this couplet:

For those who cannot write, and those who can,
All rhyme and scrawl, and scribble to a man.

A SINGLE

A SINGLE word, as you rightly observe, is very powerful, and I wonder not that *Cannons* furnished food for contemplation. — To think, after having read the animated description of Lord *Timon's* villa, full of false magnificence, without either sense or taste, that

Deep harvests bury all his pride had plann'd;
and that

—laughing Ceres re-assumes the land;

must indeed give one a very mean opinion of the *Timons* of the age, who build their fame on as false a foundation; who forget, amidst their works of magnificence, this plain precept,

'Tis *use* alone that *sanctifies* expence.—

You have with a few strokes given a very lively description of a miserable couple: I should like, methinks, to over-
hear

hear a few dialogues of theirs, when they are in the fiery mood, high seasoned with *Attic salt*: a pair of classical scolds must make charming conversation between them.—

YOU justly observe, that the introduction of such a character as old H—upon the stage, would be an affront to the audience. To a modern audience it would; but our ancestors were not so soon affronted at their theatrical representations.—We are ever complaining of the want of new characters, and yet give no encouragement to an author to bring them forward to our view. To the caprice therefore of taste, not the want of original characters, or of authors possessed of talents to grouse those characters together, is the present decline of *humour* in comedy to be attributed.—The dramatic reputation of Shakespear and Johnson is so well established, that their grossest absurdities are tolerated; but a poet of this age, cramped with the shackles of criticism,

if he boldly deviates from the common track, meets with no quarter: his motto must be, "Correctly dull."—

SOPHY runs in my head.—I can't help being uneasy on her account: I feel for *you*, Eliza, because I know your friendship for her is too great to let you be indifferent either to her pleasures or her pains.—Your sensibility is equally alive; but I am afraid, from that tenderness of disposition, your enjoyments bear no proportion to your sufferings. But from that disposition, you are so amiable in *my* eyes, that I would not wish to have you divested of it: for tenderness does honour to human nature; and he whose stony heart is void of that,

Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils—
Let no such man be trusted.—

SHAKESPEAR levels this caution against the man who is not pleased with the concord

cord of sweet sounds ; and surely the same caution may be urged against him who is totally devoid of tender sensations.— That Shakespear himself was moved with such sounds, and melted with such sensations, the many harmonious and humane passages in his writings sufficiently convince us.

YOU don't know how much I am entertained with your remarks on the books you read, and the characters which come in your way. To those who, like us, are not contented with a superficial survey of the first or the last, every book and every character we meet with affords matter for speculation : and your speculative people never want employment.—Objects which are unnoticed by common eyes, engage *theirs* ; and from incidents disregarded by the bulk of mankind, they extract a great deal of food for the busy mind.—That speculative people are inclined to be amused with trifles, is indeed a truth not to be contested ; but if those trifles lead to no

I 2

serious

serious consequences, the speculatist has no reason to be ashamed of his ruling passion, notwithstanding the severe sarcasms which the very active spirits of the age throw out against him;—restless spirits, who cannot bear their own thoughts, and are therefore never happy but when they are disturbing the peace of society with their activities.

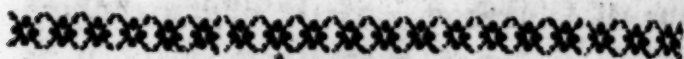
I HAVE just looked over what I have written, and wonder at myself for running on with so much puerility and prolixity. —I am absolutely tired with reading my own trite reflections, unimportant conjectures, and irregular digressions: for the first and second, I ought to make some apology; but the last are allowable in compositions of this kind; wherein the writer may fly from subject to subject, according to the various humours he is in while he is engaged in them, with the desultory rapidity of a Sterne;—the most desultory, rapid writer of the present age, abounding

abounding with immethodical authors. Yet those authors have their admirers, and their works *circulate*: rare encouragement for me, Eliza, if ever I should be seized with a passion for publication, and long to see myself introduced into the literary world.—

YOU may be sure, by all this trifling, that my mind is perfectly at ease;—it is as easy as it can be in your absence.—But though I am deprived of the companion, I receive great delight from the correspondent.

Your's, &c.

EDWARD.



L E T T E R XXIV.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

O F all your letters, the last is not least in my esteem ; by filling your sheet so full, you greatly lessen that tediousness which I always feel in the dull intervals while our letters are upon the road. — On the contents of the *last* letter I feast till another arrives, and read every passage in it over and over with new delight, unless there is any thing in it to occasion a different sensation. — Your digressive manner of writing is exceedingly agreeable to me ; and as I am sure you will never soar into the regions of rhapsody, you cannot be too rapid and immethodical : — but you pay no compliment to the taste of the age, when you say it a-

bounds

bounds with immethodical authors.—In familiar epistles a loose, rambling way of writing is more than pardonable; it is pleasing; but there is no excuse for those who hurry their half-digested thoughts to the press, and from an excess of vanity, glory in their imperfections: I say *glory*; for a man must have an uncommon share of self-satisfaction, before he can think himself of consequence enough to attract public attention, and to merit public admiration, with the crudities of his brain. But of these self-satisfied authors there is a plentiful crop in your crowded metropolis; and you, who are in the midst of them, are, I doubt not, much diverted with their feeble efforts to render themselves immortal by their writings.—Every vain man is a laughable creature; but certainly a vain author is doubly ridiculous;—because more extensively so.—Don't you think me very pert and presuming, thus to “exalt myself in the “chair of criticism,” as a certain pompous
 I 4 writer

writer says, and deliver my opinion in so peremptory a style?—What a parcel of p's have I packed together? and I did not intend to huddle them so close to each other, not being *violently* fond of alliteration; but they would come together, and I hope they won't tire your tongue to pronounce them.—You often tell me how much you are pleased with my vivacity;—and I believe you speak from your heart, because you never deceived me: but I wish this letter of mine may not make you think me extravagantly alert with my pen; for I feel a strange desire to run on with prodigious celerity and speed; two words for the same thing; but we women are very fond of synonymous terms. Am I not provokingly in spirits to-day, Edward? Come, confess the truth; I won't be angry with you;—can I? What a short quere? and therefore soon answered. Swift was often heard to say, “When I sit down to write
“a letter, I never lean upon my elbow,
“till I have finished it.”—In this particular

cular I follow the Dean's example. Perhaps you will tell me, that if I leaned that way more, my letters would be more correct. Granted; but are they not, as I study for no particular phrases, or polished paragraphs, the truer representations of my mind?—And do you not prefer one line from the heart, to a thousand from the head?—I know you do.—

ARE you not surprised that I have not yet mentioned Sophy, concerning whose health I was so much alarmed in my last letter? She *has* the small-pox, but in so very favourable a manner, that I believe her constitution will not be spoiled, nor her charms impaired by that frightful distemper, so often fatal to the features and complexion.—Sir Charles behaves like an angel upon the occasion, and plainly proves by the whole course of his behaviour, that it is not the tincture of a skin alone that he admires,—He is not one of those

Who

Who only prize the beauteous shell,
But slight the inward gem.

I HOPE, however, in a short time to tell you that Sophy is very near as handsome as she was before the attack upon her beauty; for, in spite of all our speeches about the gem within, we cannot but wish to have that gem *well-set*.

I AM very glad that the remarks I make on the books I read, and the characters I meet with, afford you so much amusement. By having so strong a turn for observation, I am never idle? the time never hangs heavy on my hands, but when I am waiting for your answers: if the post man happens to stay a minute beyond his usual hour, I am too much in the fidgets to attend to any thing. Like all other impatient people, I make no allowance for unavoidable delays; and sometimes during the commotion of my ideas, tax my Edward with forgetfulness. — I am very
ready,

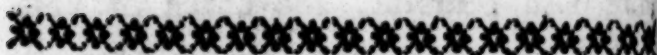
ready, you see, to unbosom myself.—Yes, Edward, you know each emotion of my heart ; I tell you freely all my feelings, and receive great pleasure from the communication of them, because I firmly believe that the emotions of *your* heart are communicated with equal freedom. After this declaration, then, can you be surprised that I am anxious for your letters ; or be angry with me for accusing you of tardiness in the dispatch of them ? Anxiety is inseparable from affection ; to that therefore impute all my little uneasinesses, and let that make the disclosure of them pardonable.—As much as I love to correspond with you, I heartily wish our correspondence was at an end ; for I have a thousand things to say to you, which I can't commit to paper ; and very probable it is that I should talk a great deal of nonsense :—but though a certain poet says, that “ nonsense itself is eloquence in love,” he undoubtedly meant that kind of nonsense which

which is never to be written.—Now, to sit down and write nonsense will never do.—There is no living without a little of it in conversation ; but if it is *genuine*, the least particle of it will lose its *spirit* by repetition. Second-hand nonsense is the saddest stuff in the world.—*And so*, for fear I should run into the very folly I am railing against, farewell.

ELIZA.

P. S. I am glad your mind is so perfectly easy, and hope nothing will destroy its tranquility again. — With regard to our separation, we have, I think, partly by necessity and partly by philosophy, reasoned ourselves into resignation to our lot ; and I am strongly inclined to believe, that by patience and perseverance, we shall surmount all the difficulties which retard the completion of our desires ; because those desires are bounded by discretion.—Were we unreason-

unreasonable in our wishes, we should not deserve to have them gratified.—I hope our wishes are reasonable ; but, in short, we are such poor short-sighted mortals, and know so little what we want, that I am almost afraid to wish for any thing. The vanity of human wishes is a fine subject for a moralist to enlarge upon ; but I doubt it is an incurable vanity, for our wishes end not but with our lives.—



LETTER XXV.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

WELL done, my lovely, lively correspondent : run away as rapidly as you will with your nimble fingers, you cannot run too fast.—The faster you run with your pen, the more pleasure you give me : for without such readiness of thought, and facility of expression, letters are languid things, and time is but thrown away in writing them.—I am glad you don't lean on your elbow, for I have (with Pope) a mortal aversion to what they call a fine letter.—I always suspect that the writers of such letters have the *press* before them, and please themselves with thinking how pretty this period, and that reflection, would appear in print.—Now those who
please

please themselves in this way, Eliza, *must* write with restraint, and check the effusions of the heart, while they are hunting after choice words to dress their thoughts in; resembling those painters who lay more stress on *colouring* than *expression*.

I AM truly rejoiced to hear that Sophy has the small-pox in so favourable a manner, and admire the behaviour of Sir Charles upon the occasion; I did indeed expect such behaviour from so deserving a man, who will, I am sure, always prize the *gem* beyond the *shell*.—By the way, that is a very agreeable ballad from which you extracted your couplet: I recollected it immediately, and dipped into the third volume of Doddsley's Poems, where I read the whole with new pleasure; for I had forgot it.

I AM glad the time never hangs heavy on your hands; you certainly take the best methods to prevent its ever being irksome.

some.—With the taste you have for reading, and your turn for observation, you have few opportunities to complain of the tediousness of time.—As to your fidgets, when the postman is not so quick as you wish him to be, I can easily account for them; being often in the same way myself, while I fret at the lingering of a letter-carrier.—All true lovers, I believe, in our situation, have pretty nearly the same feelings, the same fidgets.—Anxiety, as you justly observe, is inseparable from affection; and they give the strongest proofs of the last, who discover the strongest symptoms of the first.—We have reasoned ourselves, you say, into resignation to our lot; we have so, but we cannot reason ourselves out of sensibility.—The Stoics, with all their boasting, and affected apathy, felt the force of passions which they were ashamed to own, and which they could not, with all their opposition to nature, extinguish.—What a ridiculous attempt!—

NOT-

NOTWITHSTANDING what you say about the vanity of human wishes, I heartily wish that I could hear from your lips some of those nonsensical things which you will not convey to me in a letter : for I doubt not but our nonsense would agree very well together. — It would not perhaps be entertaining to a third person, because a third person, by not being interested in it, would think it quite insipid, if not unintelligible.—

I AM going to make you stare.—Mrs. G— is grown a violent *carder* ; nothing but shuffle and cut — Would you believe it ? Even *she* has routes ; by which she very justly exposes herself to the ridicule of those dear friends who crowd to her little lodging, on purpose to enjoy a hearty laugh when they go home.—When people with scanty incomes attempt to put themselves on a footing with their superiors in fortune, they deserve all the contempt they meet with. — Mrs. G—

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starves herself at home, in order to make a pitiful figure abroad ; for with all her efforts to appear of consequence, the shabby gentility of her whole appearance discovers at first sight the narrowness of her circumstances ; and the accompaniment of airs and graces, of which you know she has a plentiful stock, marks her a proper object “ for the hand of scorn to “ point his slow and moving finger at.” —She lodges at present at a barber’s: with only one maid, she has two rooms, —if rooms they may be called,—on the first floor, with a dark closet, into which she crams herself every night, in order to keep her apartments for company.—She had an *immense* route the other night ; and who do you think *enacted* the part of a footman?—Only one of the dirty boys out of the shop. I say an *immense* route, for there were two tables ; one in each room ; and I do assure you it was Mrs. G—s crowded night ; for she had a *dozen*
dear

dear friends who came to shuffle away the evening with her.—

THERE is no keeping the *best company* in town without playing at cards;—for which reason, as I am nobody at that diversion, I find it difficult to meet with companions of my own complexion. — The love of play is now the universal passion, not the love of fame, from the highest to the lowest.—In every house in town, especially in *polite* families, the manners of the parlour are closely copied in the kitchen; the same follies repeated, and the same vices indulged. — A friend of mine humorously enough calls a kitchen-card-party a subterraneous *route*: and very often in the same house the similitude of manners is so great, that while the well-dressed company above are exhibiting all the infernal passions to which human nature is too prone, their faithful representatives in the lower regions are playing the devil

with as much *spirit* and *politeness*.—I often think of an old comedy, entitled and called, “A Mad World, my Masters ;” and often mutter to myself those emphatical words, when I *review* the manners of the present age, which abounds with scenes and characters for the entertainment of the laughing philosopher.—Adieu.

EDWARD.

LET.



LETTER XXVI.

ELIZA to EDWARD.

IT is very plain, I think, that I write without having the *press* before my eyes: and that I have no ambition to appear in *print*.—I take the first words that occur to express my thoughts, when I sit down to communicate those thoughts to you; but were I to send a letter to some very accurate people, who would start at an unclassical expression, I should certainly lean upon my elbow more than once before I finished it.

SOPHY mends every day.—Sir Charles is every thing she can wish him.—

K 3

MRS.

Mrs. G— a carder?—You make me stare, indeed!—Well, I never thought she would have rendered herself so extremely ridiculous, by sacrificing the little substance she has to the shrine of Fashion.—Her income, though scanty, is sufficient for the decencies of life; but if she will ever abridge herself of those to make a false figure in the world, she must undoubtedly appear in a most laughable light, and furnish out curious scenes for the merriment of her *friends*. With what strange characters does every corner of the world abound! and how——But it is to no purpose to pour out a heap of reflections on the follies and vices of mankind.—Every little scribbler now-a-days has a stroke at them; and the most eminent writers are neither able by railing or reason to remove them.—“To mend the “world’s a vast design,” says the ingenious author of the *Spleen*.—A vast design truly: but, perhaps, both the follies and the vices of which we complain, would grow

grow more enormous, if they were not now and then smartly lashed by the rod of satire.—I look upon a satirist, therefore, as a very useful member of society, provided he is not too personal in the application of his correctives.—To return to Mrs G—: I was vastly diverted with your manner of displaying her shifts to make a show, and shall often think of the dark closet and the barber's boy.—I once had a good opinion of her understanding; but from the sudden alteration in her domestic *manceuvres*, the poor woman's intellects are certainly *deranged*. However, let her intellects be ever so much disordered, she will find people enough in your mad metropolis to keep her in countenance.—Adieu.

ELIZA.



LETTER XXVII.

EDWARD to ELIZA.

I HAVE no complaints to make against the contents of your last letter, except the brevity of it.—I cannot help notifying my disappointment.—You seemed to be in so fine a humour for writing, that I expected a very long epistle; but you damped my expectations with your *adieu*, half an hour before I wanted to see that *pious* conclusion. *Pious* do you say? Yes, Eliza; split the word, and you will not think my epithet improper.—I hope you will make me amends in your next.—

COMING home last night about dusk, I tumbled over a bundle of papers; which,
by

by the glimmering of a lamp near me, appeared to be of the literary kind; and every thing in that way always rivets my attention.—I hurried them therefore into my pocket, in hopes of being amused with the perusal of them; and very much amused I have been with them, though the collection only consisted of hints, sketches and fragments, on various subjects, in verse and prose.—The following extracts will, I believe, afford you some entertainment; and if they do, I will now and then transcribe a few pieces from the same hand.—

MISCELLANEOUS THOUGHTS.

“ THE absurdity of celebrating Lord
 “ Mayor’s Day at the dullest, darkest,
 “ part of the year, is obvious to every
 “ body; and hundreds have reason to re-
 “ member it afterwards, by the disorders
 “ they contract while they are gazing, ex-
 “ posed

“ posed to foul air, at the tawdry caval-
“ cade.—One would think that the first
“ Lord Mayor had been an apothecary.”—

“ Dark authors will soon be forgotten:
“ for oblivion is the natural consequence
“ of obscurity.—He who writes not to
“ the understanding, will make no im-
“ pression on the memory; for how can
“ the mind retain that which it cannot
“ comprehend?”

“ WHEN I see half a dozen pavours in
“ a cold morning, tossing about their
“ *flints* with vigour, and tossing down
“ their *porter* with alacrity; and when I
“ see at the same time their idle master,
“ who stands freezing and fretting to
“ make them mind what they are about,
“ I look on the former as very enviable
“ fellows,

“ fellows, and on the latter as a pitiable
 “ object.”—

“ DRYDEN, in his dedication prefix-
 “ ed to his *Virgil*, complains of the *stately*
 “ *rustian*, and *lofty childishness*, in some of
 “ the pompous tragedies written by his
 “ cotemporaries. Nothing says he, but
 “ nature can give a sincere pleasure. I
 “ am sincerely of his opinion; but what
 “ severe strokes are these against his own
 “ plays, particularly those *heroical* com-
 “ positions, full of *heroical* nonsenses
 “ and the false sublime, which are justly
 “ ridiculed in the *Rehearsal*? Dryden was
 “ famous for such sarcasms against him-
 “ self. His prefaces and dedications
 “ abound with absurdities, inconsistencies,
 “ and contradictions; dogmatical asser-
 “ tions and boyish conceits. intermixed
 “ at the same time with pertinent reflec-
 “ tions, uncommon observations, solid
 “ learning, and sound criticism. There
 “ never

“ never was perhaps a more unequal
“ writer.—But his inequality must ra-
“ ther be imputed to want of time than
“ want of talents:—if he had been in
“ affluent circumstances he would not, I
“ trust, have permitted so many crudities
“ to be published.”

“ WE take wonderful pains to conceal
“ our failings and our faults, but are
“ very little inclined to correct them.
“ We often, indeed, by those pains make
“ them more apparent, as men in liquor
“ render themselves doubly ridiculous by
“ the efforts they make to convince us
“ of their sobriety.—When we attempt to
“ deceive others, we often give them an
“ advantage over us, with they would
“ not have had without our alarming
“ their suspicion.”

“ IF men stated their wants by their
“ reason, they would be happy : but while
“ their wishes are measured by their fan-
“ cy, how can felicity be their lot ?”——

OF such detached pieces, Eliza, does my collection consist ; and if you like what I have tranſcribed, a ſecond part, when I am not in a humour for compoſition, ſhall wait on you.—The peruſal of the above thoughts may perhaps furniſh you with ſeveral additional hints on the ſubjects the author has touched upon ; and I ſhould be very glad to ſee *his* out-lines filled up by *your* hand.—

BEING in a poetical, or rather rhyming mood this morning, I ſcratched off a brace of epigrams, which will perhaps amuſe you, as you are partial to all my little performances of this kind.

On

On the WORKS of ADDISON.

On ev'ry subject, mirthful or sublime,
In num'rous prose, blank verse, or flowing
rhyme,
In copious ADDISON we always meet
Sense join'd with sound, the *useful* and the
sweet.

From him the *Tatler* may be taught the way
To charm bright circles of the young and gay;
Spectator of the world in all its shapes,
No part his wide surveying eyes escapes;

By him the *Lover* may with happy art,
Find a quick passage to the female heart;
And the fair *ward* in him will ever find
A friend impartial, and a *Guardian* kind.

His chaste corrected works at once impart
Food to the mind, and physic to the heart:
And they who keep his polish'd page in view,
Improve their manners and their morals too.—

On the GENIUS of SWIFT.

In SWIFT we humour, wit, and satire, find,
 With ease and vigour happily combin'd :
 Like a bright day in winter, shines the Dean,
 As clear, as bright, as cutting and as keen ;
 Pleasure and pain at once he does impart ;
 And with his splendor charms us while we
 smart.—

I HAVE crowded my sheet so full, in
 order to set you a good example,—don't
 forget to follow it—that I have left my-
 self but just room enough to finish with
 the usual conclusion of

Your's, &c.

EDWARD.

END of the FIRST VOLUME.